

*The Righteous Man's Character and
Privilege in Death.*

A
S E R M O N

Occasion'd by the
D E A T H

Of the REVEREND

Mr. JOHN HUGHES,

And publish'd at the Request of the Hearers.

BY
JOHN SHERMAN, A. M.

L O N D O N:

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Printed by J. G. ...

SERMON

Occasion'd by the

DEATH

OF



MR. JOSEPH ...

And Minister of the Gospel of the ...

JOHN SHERRMAN, A.M.

LONDON:
Printed for T. COY at the ...
Royal Exchange in ...
[Price six-pence]

TO
Nathaniel Brassey, Esq;

And the rest of the

SOCIETY

OF

Protestant Dissenters
at *WARE*,

The following DISCOURSE
is humbly dedicated

By one, who earnestly prays, that
Truth and Liberty, Peace and
Holiness may ever flourish among
them; and who is,

To those great, and valuable Purposes,

Their Sincere

and Deyoted Servant,

JOHN SHERMAN.

TO
Nathaniel Bailey, Esq;

And the rest of the

SOCIETY

OF

Protestant Dissenters
at WAR.

The following Discourse
is humbly dedicated

By one, who earnestly prays, that
Truth and Liberty, Peace and
Holiness may ever flourish among
them; and who is,

To those great and venerable Trustees,

Their sincere

and devoted servant,

JOHN SHREWMAN

PROV. xiv. 32.

The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death.

THE two main springs of action in mankind, are hope and fear; and when these passions are struck by proper motives, and raised to a due pitch, they are then of the greatest use in life.

Just apprehensions of the nature and tendency of moral good and evil, will have this desirable effect: For as man naturally aspires after happiness, and knows, from the reason of things, that there is a God, who governs the world; and is well assured, both from reason and scripture, that the soul is immortal, and that there is a future state of rewards and punishments; he must needs be filled with fear, at the prospect of

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the terrible consequences of an immoral life, and be animated with resolution and courage, by the hopes of the glorious and happy issue of a pious and virtuous one.

'Tis indeed very much in the power of man, whether he will give place to such just and wise reflexions or no; and we find by sad experience that too many do not. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, have such a vast power and influence over them, that they move on, from day to day, in a course of actions greatly beneath the dignity of their natures, and utterly inconsistent with their true felicity and glory. *Those* men must be brought first to think justly, and would to God they were! and then there will be hope of their reformation: *I thought on my ways and turned my feet into the path of thy commandments.* There are *others* too who entertain just thoughts of God and religion, and of whose state we ought to think well, tho' they fall very short of that degree of perfection, to which they might attain.

What can be more proper to rouse the former out of their deluding dangerous dream, and to put these latter upon greater care, circumspection, earnestness, and zeal in the grand affair of religion, than to turn their views to the observation which *Solomon*, who thoroughly understood how to touch

touch the passions of human nature, makes in the words of our text: *The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death.*

We have here two very different parties brought to their last moments, death appears ready to execute his commission, and the unbounded awful prospect of eternity opens upon them. In this view of matters, the *one* is greatly shock'd; his heart fails him, confusion and dread appear in his countenance, the pains of hell take hold upon him, and the arrows of the Almighty stick fast in his soul: but notwithstanding all his reluctance and unwillingness to go, he is *driven* away to appear before a jealous God whom he has affronted. The *other* receives his summons to depart, with peace in his breast, all is serene and calm, the immortal part quits its tenement of clay with the well-grounded hope of ascending to happiness and glory.

If you ask whence it comes to pass that those persons go off the stage with so grand a difference in the temper of their minds? You need only read the *text* again, and you will there meet with a sufficient answer: *The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death.* The man that fear'd not God while health and strength remain'd, trembles when sickness

seizes him and death approaches, at the thought of an almighty, infinitely holy, and just Being ; and no wonder, since all those arguments and methods by which he encouraged himself in his former infidelity, impiety, and unrighteousness, now appear absurd and unreasonable to the last degree ; *he* can no longer ward off the alarms of conscience by a hurry of business, or the noise and jargon of his jovial merry companions, nor have his mighty reasons, such as he once thought so, against providence, a future state, and the christian revelation, now any force in them ; so that there remains nothing for him, unhappy soul ! *but a fearful looking for of fiery wrath and indignation.* But with the *righteous* the case is otherwise ; he having sincerely endeavoured to approve himself to God in his life-time, meets at death with good hope, peace, and comfort : the testimony of his conscience that *in simplicity and godly sincerity, and not with fleshly wisdom, he hath had his conversation in the world,* enables him to lift up his head in his last moments with joy, in the firm belief *that his redemption draws nigh.*

What a noble encouragement have we from hence, to pursue with the most unwearied application, and the warmest zeal, the path of piety and virtue ; and what an awful and awakening warning to shun the ways of sin ? Who would not wish to die the

the death of the righteous? and where is the man that would not tremble at the thought of dying with a soul full of horror?

But in order to weaken the force of this motive 'tis alledged, that there have been instances of immoral persons going out of the world in peace, and of righteous ones dying in the midst of confusion and terror: nay more than this, some will pretend to account for the whole affair, by telling us, that the only reason why any man has dreadful apprehensions, in his last hours, let his life have been never so vile, is meerly a want of animal spirits; that 'tis owing to the weakness and low state in which he is at that time; and that wherever there happens to be a flow of spirits there is peace and quietness: I wish heartily that they who are in this way of thinking, would, before they lay any stress upon it, consider, whether in the first place they can prove, that good men have usually in their last hours more spirit and life than the wicked and ungodly; and when they have done this, which I am sure they can't easily do, I would then desire of them to assign a reason why it is so: and till they have gone thus far, this part of the objection is of no force.

As to the former part it must be acknowledged, that there have been instances of some, who, according to the apprehension
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of by-standers, have after a life of wickedness died with peace and courage ; but may not what is call'd courage and quietness be only a strong and resolute silence ? The man perhaps is loth to give his friends any uneasiness by venting his complaints, in a case in which he apprehends it is not in their power to relieve him : or he may be greatly ignorant, and so insensible of his dangerous state. There have been shocking instances of this kind. He may be given up by God in judgment to hardness of heart : or his peace may proceed from false principles, such as that abominable one, *that God sees no sin in his own people* ; a notion which overturns all religion at once, and ought to be abhorred by every man that owns the christian revelation.

'Tis likewise true, that the righteous man's sun may set in a cloud ; he may have his doubts and fears at the approach of death : and it is as true, that these distressing thoughts may be owing either to a melancholy constitution, wrong sentiments concerning the terms of acceptance with God ; false apprehensions of the state of his soul or late failings.

These instances we have mention'd are such as do not very often happen, and when they do may be accounted for ; and therefore they by no means invalidate the motive
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to a pious and holy life, which the wise man here offers. He does not say that every wicked man dies with terror in his mind, nor that every good man has comfort and hope in his last hours: all that he intends is, that in the general, and for the most part it is so. And here I am persuaded he has the experience of every age and country to support his observation.

We are at present, you all know, concern'd with the death of the righteous man only; for 'tis such a one we have lately lost from this society: *one* whose name and memory ever ought, and ever will be, I verily believe, in a peculiar manner, precious to you; to you, who have long enjoy'd his wife and faithful labours. While this *great* and *good* man lived, he was no stranger to a *rational hope* of future happiness and glory: No, he often look'd forward to that state to which he is gone, with the expectation of meeting with perfect rest and never-ending joy: nor did his hope fail him in his last hours; *the righteous hath hope in his death.*

I. We have here the most valuable character in the world mention'd. This we shall take particular notice of, and likewise of its peculiar excellence.

II. A

II. A very desirable thing is asserted of such in general, namely, that they have hope in their death.

III. We shall examine into the reasonableness of this hope.

I. We have here the most valuable character in the world mention'd. This we shall take particular notice of; and likewise of its peculiar excellence. *The righteous man*; that's the character, and 'tis a very comprehensive one.

The term *righteous* here is to be understood in so extensive a sense, as to relate, not only to the duties we owe to mankind, but to those too which we owe to God and ourselves. It is usual, in the sacred writings, to express the whole of religion, by some eminent branch or principle of it; and certainly righteousness is such a one: so that by the *righteous* here is meant the religious.

But then let it be remember'd, that *religion* does not consist in a meer set of notions, be they never so just and right; in an external show of devotion, be it never so exact and constant; in a warm attachment to any particular party of christians, even though they should be the purest and best
upon

upon earth; in a dull and gloomy countenance, or a severe treatment of the body; in an appearance of love to God, where love to mankind is wanting; or in a perpetual talk, without any due regard had to time, place, or person, about serious subjects. *Religion is something more and better than all this: It consists in living soberly, righteously, and godly; in visiting the fatherless and the widows, and in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world: in doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God.*

The religious man is one who loves God with all his heart and soul, and that from a full conviction of his infinite perfections; from a firm belief that 'tis the enjoyment of his favour, and nothing else, can make him happy; and from a deep sense of innumerable undeserv'd favours received. He entertains a reverential fear of the most high, and exercises an humble trust in him; conscious to himself that he who hath all things at command is able to do for him, and from the infinite benignity of his nature, inclined to do exceeding abundantly, above all that he can ask or think. He gives credit to the discovery of his mind upon proper evidence, and stands ready to obey him in all things. He is in subjection to the father of spirits, and patiently bears his correcting hand, knowing that when God chastises the children of men, 'tis for their profit, that they might be

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partakers

partakers of his holiness. He worships him both in private and publick, and that not with lip-service, but in spirit and in truth. He aims at his heavenly father's honour and glory, in conjunction with his own everlasting happiness; and is ambitious of nothing more than an encreasing likeness to him in all moral perfections. He loves the Lord Jesus sincerely, and takes care not to affront the Holy Spirit.

As to his *neighbour*, he acts upon that noble, but too much neglected principle, of doing to others what, in reason and justice, he might expect that they should do to him, was he in their circumstances and they in his. He converses in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, scorning to separate the innocency of the dove from the wisdom of the serpent. He is ready to do all the good offices to mankind, both as to time and eternity, that are in his power. He rejoices in their happiness, and mourns with them in their pains and sorrows. He is very careful not to wound any in that dear and tender part, reputation; will say all the good of others that he can, upon a proper occasion, and charitably hides a multitude of sins, 'till there appears a plain and just call to mention them. He is one who speaks as he thinks, is true to his engagements as far as he can, and which is a most beautiful part of his character, he
heartily

heartily forgives and prays for all his enemies: *Father forgive them.*

As to self-government he studies how he may best keep his appetites, passions, and desires in full subjection to the wise and wholesome dictates of reason and revelation. *This* is the righteous, or, in other words, the religious man, and certainly such deserve to be called the excellent ones of the earth: They are so in the sight of God, angels, and all wise and good men: Nay, there are such charms in piety and virtue, as raise a veneration and esteem in the minds of those, who refuse to practise what they cannot but love.

The religious have too often been the subject of ridicule and banter, among the prophane, and I was going to add, stupid part of mankind; but I rather chuse to call them rash; for many of these creatures are masters of fine sense, though they miserably abuse it: However, they may make themselves as merry as they please upon this head at present, but if ever they come to think justly, they will with concern and shame be obliged to acknowledge, that they have injur'd and slighted those who have deserved the highest esteem; for the righteous man is more excellent than others upon many accounts.

He is so as he bears a nearer resemblance to the original and fountain of perfection, and, in consequence of this, has a share in the special favour of the most high: for certainly the greatest honour human nature is capable of, is to be like God, and to enjoy his smiles.

This will further appear, if we attend to the greatness of his mind, and the freedom of his spirit. By greatness of mind we mean a taste for things of the highest nature and importance, and by freedom of spirit, such a command of passion, as is necessary to a man's acting up to the dictates of a well-inform'd judgment: in both these views the excellence of the religious man discovers itself, in a very affecting manner.

The perfections of the great God, discover'd in the make and constitution of the heavens and the earth; in the government of the world, and more especially by revelation; the nature of man, the relation he stands in to God, and the expectation his maker has from him; his present condition; the design of God as to his recovery, and the wise and gracious method taken by the father of mercies in order to it; the reasonableness, necessity, and happy consequences of a pious and holy life; the vileness and dreadful tendency of a contrary conduct;

conduct ; the immortality of the soul ; the uncertainty of life, the certainty of death and judgment, and the vastly different sentences that will in that day be passed on the righteous and on the wicked : These are among the subjects which entertain his mind ; these are the things he has a relish for, and thinks of with seriousness and close attention, being conscious to himself, that they are matters of the last consequence, even of infinite importance. He dares not put the eternal mind far from him, nor can he suffer himself to despise heaven, or laugh at damnation : while some, too many, God knows ! have their reasoning power employed, mainly, upon comparatively mean objects, and confine their views within the narrow limits of this world ; the righteous man's soul is conversant about nobler things ; his divine nature cannot be satisfy'd with such clouds and vanity ; he aspires after and travels by faith to a better and more glorious world, and fixes upon no other being but God himself for the portion of his soul. This is true greatness of mind.

There is besides this, in every good man, a noble freedom of spirit : Such have burst those chains, and have got out of that abject state of slavery, in which great multitudes are held, through the unhappy influence of lust and passion. *See* the covetous man sacrificing a thousand hours of innocent

cent entertainments and lawful pleasures, and, which is worse, wronging his neighbour, grinding the poor, forfeiting his honour and reputation, wounding his own soul, and even running the risque of hell and damnation. And what must we say of him that drowns his reason in his cups? not satisfied, 'till by an excess of liquor, he unfits his soul for a proper discharge of its duty, lays himself open to innumerable instances of folly and rashness, makes himself a burden to his friends, and the scorn of his enemies, and becomes at once unfit for heaven and earth.

The righteous soul abhors this conduct, and stands fast in the liberty wherewith Christ, by the renewing influences of the holy spirit, hath made him free; and scorns to yield himself any more a servant, I should have said slave, to any mean or ignoble passion. And can there be a more glorious object upon earth, among the sons of *Adam*, than this, in the light in which we are now viewing him? or, on the other hand, is there a meaner one than the man that is at the beck and controul of every unworthy appetite? how excellent is the one? how contemptible the other? We are apt to gaze with fond and ambitious eyes on earthly grandeur and honour, and to look with concern and pity upon such as are chain'd down to gallies, and confined to dark and cold

cold prisons, and loathsome dungeons: but the slavery of these latter, is vastly more tolerable in the judgment of a wise mind than that of the sinner; and the grandeur of the former is not worthy to be laid in balance against the greatness and freedom of the christian's spirit. We might proceed to other parts of the religious man's excellency, such as the principles upon which he acts; the pleasures he is most entertained with; the firmness of his mind, and that courage which enables him to bear thro' the greatest dangers in the cause of his God; and as 'tis such a one, to whose memory we are now paying our respects, it would be a pleasure to me to go on. But 'tis more proper at present to turn our thoughts,

2dly, To what is asserted, in the general, of those to whom the character, we have been describing, belongs; and 'tis this, that they have hope in their death. Let us briefly consider the object of this hope. And we are here obliged to throw our thoughts into as narrow a compass as we can.

The righteous expect to be at death for ever freed from every painful sensation, and disturbing thought; and the more of these he has met with in the course of his pilgrimage, the pleasanter are such hopes when his departure is at hand: he then joyfully believes, 'twill soon be out of the power of
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his body, either by being the occasion or instrument of sin, or the seat of diseases, to rack and torment his soul. He hopes he shall be freed from every temptation and snare, which the frowns or flatteries of the world, and the malice of the devil were wont to throw in his way; and from all those imperfections which attend, and grieve, and wound the hearts of the brightest saints. He hopes that clouds and darkness shall no more hang around his mind, nor the least frown appear in the countenance of his heavenly father. That storms and tempests from every quarter shall cease, and all shall be serene and calm. That he shall soon reap the delightful fruits of his past meekness, humility, patience, temperance, charity, godliness, and brotherly love: That in consequence of such a conduct, he shall be able to hold up his head with joy before God; and when he comes there, for which his pious soul longs, that he shall have more comprehensive, clear, and distinct apprehensions of the adorable perfections of the Deity, than he could ever, after all his most diligent searches, arrive at here. He hopes that when once he removes from his earthly house, he shall descry inconceivable marks of grandeur, wisdom, power, and goodness, in the make of the heavens and the earth and their furniture, beyond what he could possibly do while confined to this small part of the universe. That those steps of divine government

ment which now are to him a great deep, and have been sometimes almost ready to overwhelm him, shall be there unfolded, and appear to be every way worthy of God, to be wise, just and righteous parts of one grand and vastly comprehensive plan, which the sovereign of the world has laid, and is steadily pursuing from one generation to another. He dies, hoping that his views of the engaging wonders of redeeming grace will be greatly enlarged; and that he shall have the unspeakable pleasure to behold *Jesus*, whom his soul ardently loves, sitting at the right hand of the Father, and the honour to join the natives of *Zion*, and the spirits of just men made perfect, in ascribing glory and salvation to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. That he shall have the most free, friendly, and improving conversation with the inhabitants of the new *Jerusalem*, and when his Lord shall make his second appearance in the grand and solemn character of judge, that he also shall appear with him in order to be openly acquitted, and to have a body raised from the grave, freed from present imperfections, and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body; with these great and noble, with these infinitely valuable expectations, the heaven-born soul leaves this wilderness, ascends, and is seen by us no more.

Need I ask where have been your thoughts while I have been mentioning these things? I verily believe that they have been fixed, as mine were when I penn'd them, upon our dear departed friend. With what pleasure have we heard him

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speak

speak of God, his works, his government, of
 the nature of angels, their office and their en-
 tertainments, and of the state and employment
 of separate spirits? Has he not when his
 heart has been warm'd with these important
 themes, greatly longed to be where he now is?
 Methinks I see him, and O! how pleased he
 looks, conversing with some angels, perhaps
 with those that knew and loved him in this
 lower world, about these weighty points: and
 let me add, for sure I am, I can with justice do
 it, but few have left this state so well prepared
 for such a conversation as himself. With an-
 gels let us leave him for the present.

The hope which we have been speaking of is
 more to be desired than all the riches and ho-
 nours of the world; what can these avail, when
 the judge of all commands us to depart: no-
 thing at that solemn hour can give us peace,
 and sure peace *then* is worth a thousand worlds,
 nothing, except it be a firm belief that God is
 reconciled, and that heaven will be our portion.
 This indeed will bear our spirits up under pains
 and sickness, ay, and under what strikes deeper,
 and goes much nearer to the heart, I mean a
 dying farewell to our friends around us.

Whether this hope of happiness is turned in-
 to fruition immediately at death, or not till the
 general resurrection, has been matter of debate.
 To me it appears reasonable to suppose, that
 the soul no sooner leaves the body, but it enters
 upon a state of happiness, tho' not so great as
 what it will be in possession of after the resur-
 rection.

rection. It is certain, at least very probable, that thinking substances are essentially different from material ones; and tho' while a soul is united to a body, the good disposition of the organs of that body, is necessary to the thinking part's exerting itself in a regular manner; yet instead of imagining from hence, as some have done, that when the soul comes to be separated from its material companion, it can no longer think, we have rather reason to conclude, that it will then exert itself with more vigour and accuracy than ever it did before; because it will be freed from the many interruptions, which a weak and frail body occasion'd.

And if we consult the scriptures, we shall there meet with reasons to believe that it is the body only, and not the soul, which sleeps at death. *Daniel xii. 2. Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake;* which can be meant of the body only, unless we suppose the soul to go with it to the grave: but we are expressly inform'd that *the soul returns to God that gave it:* to that God who after he had form'd man's body out of the dust of the earth, *breathed into it a living soul.* In *Matth. xxvii. ver. 52.* we read that *the graves were open'd and many BODIES of saints which slept, arose.* It is not an easy matter (if possible) to make sense of what the apostle says, without allowing this: does he not expressly declare, I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better? The being present with Christ, is undeniably the reason of his desiring to depart this life, which it could not possibly

be, unless we allow that he thought the presence of Christ would be a pleasure and happiness to him, beyond what he met with in this world: but where there is no thought there can be no happiness. How could he have this desire if he knew that at death he must enter into a state of insensibility? While he remain'd in this world he enjoy'd pleasant communion with God and Christ; had the uncommon influences of the Holy Spirit; an opportunity of promoting the interest of his lord and master, and by that means of increasing his own future glory and happiness; and he was withal firmly perswaded, that a sufficiency of strength would be given him to conquer all his spiritual adversaries; moreover, the sooner he departed, if the soul at death was to be deprived of all thought, till the general resurrection, the longer time would he have to remain in that useless state; sure then in this case for him to desire to depart would be very strange. But here it may be said, that whether a man remains insensible a longer or shorter time, 'tis all one; for being intirely without consciousness, during that time, 'tis the same thing to him, if he finds himself happy after an age is past, as if he had entered into such a state immediately. Admitting this to be true, no one under such a view of matters, and in the Apostle's circumstances, would desire to depart: besides, if heaven be a state of progressive knowledge and happiness, the longer any one remains in a state of separation, the greater loss he sustains; for in the compass of an age he might have made a noble advancement in knowledge and bliss. From what has
been

been said, it is, I hope, probable, the righteous man will find his expectation of felicity in a considerable degree satisfied immediately at death.

We are now, *Thirdly*, to examine into the reasonableness of this hope.

That it is a reasonable hope will appear from a united view of the nature of man; the relation he stands in to God; his present condition, and from the nature of the divine being: likewise from revelation.

Man consists of soul and body; the one is a thinking, the other is a material substance: and these are as different in their natures as possible; though the contrary has been asserted; and some that have reason to be afraid of another world, would be glad to prove it. But before they can do this, they must deny one essential property in matter, and that is, that 'tis capable of being divided: or else make it evident, that to suppose the half, or the third part of a thought, is not a contradiction, and contrary to the common sense and experience of mankind: or else they must prove, that two properties directly repugnant to one another, may reasonably be allow'd to belong to the same substance. But if they can't do this, will it not follow, that a thinking being is essentially different from a material one, and consequently, that the body may be destroy'd at the same time, that the soul remains unhurt?

Further,

Further, we find our selves capable of forming a great number of ideas, different from those which are convey'd to us by the organs of sense : This is the case when we turn our thoughts upon moral subjects : we can compare our thoughts with one another, and pass thro' a long chain of reasoning in the pursuit of truth : and some minds are more pleas'd with this, than the sensualist ever was in the midst of all his ignoble entertainments. We can travel by thought without moving one step out of our place, into distant countries, even from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof, and that with greater swiftness than light itself ; nay, we can pass from this globe to the starry regions in a moment, and ascend from thence to the throne of God, and view the perfections of the eternal mind : we can call up past scenes and make them present, and can extend our views forward, even beyond the general conflagration, into the remote ages of eternity : and who is there can account for all this from any of the properties of matter or laws of motion ?

Do we not all find, that we have a power of acting, or not acting, according to the determination of our own minds, and that after the last view of the understanding is past, we can chuse whether we will exert a self-moving faculty or no ? Are we not capable of distinguishing between good and evil ; between what is, and what is not fit and proper to be done, by considering the relation which things bear

bear to one another, or by a special information from some superior being? and have we not hopes and fears to be raised by the proposal of rewards and punishments? And consequently, this being the case, are we not the proper subjects of a moral law?

Again; how strong and ardent a thirst after happiness is implanted in human nature, and does not the experience of every age convince us, that this is not to be met with here? Sure then this desire is given us in vain, and will never be satisfied, or the proper object of it dwells in a superior region, and is to be possessed in some other state.

And if we examine into the sentiments of mankind, in every age and nation, shall we not find them agreeing in this general notion, that there is a future state? And whence can this proceed? is it to be accounted for from education, superstition, or tradition? or rather, ought we not to look upon it, as the natural dictate of a reasoning mind? What worthy and commendable deeds, what truly noble and heroick actions, have been perform'd under the influence of such a principle? and how many mean, base, and pernicious actions have been prevented by it? *No one, says Cicero, in his treatise concerning old age, shall perswade me, Scipio, that your worthy father, or your grandfathers, Paulus and Africanus, or Africanus his father, or uncle, or many other excellent men, performed so many actions to be remembered by posterity, without being sensible that futurity was*
their

their right; and, if I might be allowed an old man's privilege to speak of myself, do you think that I should have endured the fatigue of so many wearisome days and nights, both at home and abroad, if I imagined that the same boundary which is set to my life must terminate my glory? Were it not more desirable to have worn out my days in ease and tranquillity, free from labour and without emulation: But I know not how, my soul has always raised itself and looked forward on futurity, in the view and expectation, that when it shall depart out of life, it shall then live for ever; and if this was not true, that the mind is immortal, the souls of the most worthy would not, above all others, have the strongest impulse to glory.

Again; this present state ever was a scene of sorrow and vexation: What *Job* says, has been found true, by dear experience, in every age, *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.* || We are placed in a world, where little pleases but in prospect, and when we obtain, what, at a distant view, we were greatly fond of, we usually find ourselves disappointed: *Where* we stand in a battle, expos'd to a thousand dangers, and yet forget our own mortality; and start, like *David*, when we hear, *Thou art the man!* *Where* pains assault us, delusions surround us, and terrors hang over us; *where* objects, as well as appetites, decay, and we yearly bury some favourite amusement or pleasure; and they that succeed are less exquisite, and full as mortal: *where* we spend the most of our days in climbing the

|| Vid. YOUNG.

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hill of our fortune, which suspends by labour any serious thought ; and when we have climbed it, and are about to change toil for enjoyment, we are surprized to see our grave so near us on the other side. *In a world*, where the infirmities of our bodies demand and support one *profession*, and the infirmities of our minds *another* ; *where* we cannot make way from our doors but through the cries of indigence or disease ; *where* youth often languishes like a tempest-beaten flower, and age shows its injuries like a blasted oak ; *where* enmity is sincere, and friendship often a name, and it is ruin to trust those, whom not to trust, is almost a crime, as a relation, a friend, a brother ; *where* many fall from credit, fortune, life, with *Cæsar's* exclamation—*And this from you ! Where* the fond mother to day looks with transport on the reward of her long labour and painful travel, which changes perhaps to morrow the cradle for the grave ; *where* the feeble father follows a favourite and only daughter, the delight of his eye, the rest of his age, to the cold and silent chambers of death, which he, perhaps, has wish'd for himself in vain, and sheds those tears over her, which should express his joy for the happy disposal of her in life : or perhaps the case is still worse, he sees her youth, and beauty, and innocence, fallen into arms, to him more dreadful than those of death. * And the business which he who remains has to do, lies within the compass of a few months, and calls for dispatch : wants and pains are all the while multiplying upon him,

* Vid. WOOLSTON.

and, under this additional load, he comes melancholy behind, 'till he either stumbles upon something which throws him into the grave, or fainting falls of himself. *In a world, in short, where* the past is next to a dream, and the future a fore travel; and the little happiness that is to be met with in it, the portion often of the wicked, while the righteous are in great distress.

Now, 'tis God that governs the world, and he is invested with the glorious attributes of infinite wisdom, power, justice, holiness, and goodness; and he ever proposes an end suitable to the dignity of his nature in all his designs: He never wants power to accomplish his wise purposes, and goodness is the attribute which he delights to display, and which inclined him to give being to the world, and to all its inhabitants: justice and holiness likewise attend his throne; and we may as well suppose this infinitely glorious sovereign to cease to exist, as to act in any one instance inconsistent with his moral perfections. With reverence then be it asked, where is the wisdom and goodness of placing such a creature as man upon earth, if within the compass of a few years, after he has travelled through many pains and sorrows, he must die and be no more? Does not such a supposition as this greatly weaken the divine authority, and abate the affections of mankind towards their creator and lord? and would not this discourage the practice of virtue? Men, as we observed before, are the proper subjects of a moral law; but

but what heart would there be in them to obey, if they found that piety and virtue were attended with misery, and wickedness with success and prosperity?

In point of justice, 'tis certain those who sin, which is the case of all mankind, suffer less than they deserve: but shall not the judge of all the earth, who loves holiness, as well as justice, show, in the sight of men, and of other rational beings, a peculiar kind regard to those, who sincerely endeavour, in the midst of all their snares and temptations, to approve themselves to him? shall he not make these, even tho' they have offended him, less miserable than those who commit iniquity with greediness, showing little or no regard to his commands? And is this always done here? If not, may we not as certainly conclude, that the righteous man's hopes at death, are just and reasonable, as that there is a God who rules the world?

The sum of what we have said amounts to this. That as the soul is a substance essentially different from the body, it may exist tho' the body be destroyed. That man is the subject of a moral law. That his creator hath implanted in him a strong desire after happiness. That this world is a scene of sorrow and trouble for the most part: and that as to felicity, what share of it is to be met with here is often the lot of the wicked, while the righteous are in distress. That in all ages, there have been found among mankind, a belief of a future state. And lastly, that since 'tis an infinitely wise, just,

powerful, good, and holy Being that governs the world, the religious man's hopes are well founded.

Let us now search the scriptures concerning this affair, and we shall find that in many places they confirm what we have said. The case of *Abel* is very much to our purpose; for here was a pious good man murdered for doing what God declares himself well pleased with. If there be no hereafter, how can we reconcile this single instance with the belief of a providence? And would it not have proved an unanswerable objection against a life of piety, whenever that should happen to be inconsistent with the interest of this present life? In *Job* you meet with a passage which carries in it a presumption, that he not only believed a future state, but was not ignorant of the doctrine of the resurrection. *For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the last day upon the earth. And tho' after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me* *. This indeed is thought by some, to be only a prediction of his future prosperity in this world, as the reward of his exemplary patience. But if this be the only meaning of this place, how comes he to complain so heavily as he does in this chapter, of his present sufferings, which were to be so shortly ended and speedily rewarded. And do not the plain and literal sense of the words sig-

* *Job* xix. 25, 26, 27.

nify a resurrection of the body after it had been destroyed by worms. In confirmation of this sense of the place 'tis remarkable, that the last verse of this book, according to the *Septuagint*, runs thus, *So Job died being old and full of days; but 'tis written, that he shall rise again with those whom the Lord raises up.* And the prophet *Daniel* declares, *That many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt; which is agreeable to, tho' not so full as, what our Lord says in the fifth of John; The hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.* In the eleventh chapter to the *Hebrews* we are inform'd, after several eminent instances of piety and holiness mentioned, *that they all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and they were perswaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were but pilgrims and strangers upon earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country: and truly had they been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned; but now they desire a better country that is an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city, even that of the new Jerusalem.* This same apostle in the first of *Corinthians* declares, *That if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable; and he positively asserts, that if we believe the resur-*
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rection of Christ, we must believe the resurrection of the dead. In *Revel. xx.* we are told, *That the sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and death and the grave deliver up the dead which are in them; and elsewhere, that Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, even so saith the spirit; they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.* And least we should think future happiness suspended 'till the general resurrection, the apostle *Paul* earnestly desires to depart, that he might be with Christ. Upon the whole then, I hope it is sufficiently evident, from the nature and reason of things, and from scripture, that the religious man's hopes in his last hours are well-grounded ones.

You are by this time, I believe, expecting to hear something more of him who knows this to be true by happy experience. He deserves to have his eminent character drawn by a much better pen than mine; but since 'tis my lot to do it, I shall endeavour to discharge this office as well as I can, from the small information I have received from others, and from my own knowledge of him.

Our departed friend descended from ancestors greatly eminent for piety and holiness. His grandfather the Reverend Mr. *George Hughes*, and his father the Reverend Mr. *Obadiab Hughes*, had both of them the honour to suffer imprisonment in the cause of Christ. Your late pastor the Reverend Mr. *John Hughes*, who inherited the graces of his forefathers, was born about the

the year 1668, and was always esteemed from a child virtuously inclined. When he came from grammar learning, his father designing him for the ministry put him under the tuition of the Reverend Mr. *Craddock* of *Bishop-Stortford*; after two years spent in academical learning there, he went over to *Geneva*, and from thence to *Utrecht*, in order to finish his studies. He continued a year in each of these places, and then he returned to his father, and discovered a stronger inclination to the study of the law than to the ministry, from the consideration of the weightiness of that office; but finding his father very averse to the former profession, and greatly desirous that he should engage in the latter, he after some time spent in deliberate thought upon matters, resolved upon the ministry; but during this demurr he was a while with Mr. *Knightly* of *Fasely* in *Northamptonshire*, as tutor; and afterwards in the same character he travell'd with Sir *John Wentworth* thro' most parts of this kingdom, and kept a journal of what he met with which was remarkable. His first labours in the ministry were at *London*; he had an evening lecture there at his uncle's the great and reverend Mr. *How*; and on the Lord's day mornings preach'd at *Hoxton*, from whence he was call'd to settle in this place, which injoy'd his faithful instructions for near thirty years, and I hope they were successful ones.

I wish I had a greater knowledge of him than I have been able to come at, during the short time I have had the pleasure and advantage of being acquainted with him. However, what follows

follows I can truly say of him; he had a clear head, a strong judgment, a large compass of thought, and a pious humble heart: which last endowment, like a proper shade in a masterly piece, spread a most engaging beauty over all the rest.

His private conversation, was manly, grave, serious, and very instructive; and withal well season'd with a graceful freedom and affability; there was nothing stiff, reserved, and assuming in him. He loved to talk of things of importance, especially in religion, and had an admirable talent, which he managed with great prudence, at giving a serious turn in conversation. I believe I may safely say, that but few conversed with him, without being made better and wiser, if it was not their own fault. Such was his humane, courteous, and condescending carriage to all, that I will venture to say it in the face of this auditory, and I verily believe, I might say it in the face of all the world, that had the happiness to know him, without fearing a contradiction, that he was universally beloved, and he certainly deserved it, for he had himself a hearty love for all mankind. He kept at the utmost distance, from what is too common a crime, I mean that of talking over the faults of others, without any just call; and when there was a necessity for any thing of this nature, it was done with much tenderness: a certain mark of a great and charitable soul.

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He never allowed himself to censure any man for differing from him in point of judgment, and this part of his conduct did not proceed from want of regard to truths of an important nature, but from a hearty love to this truly Christian and Protestant Principle, that every one in the affair of conscience and salvation, has a right to judge for himself, which no one man, nor any set of men, however dignified, ought to infringe.

He was a very hard student, pursued truth with the most unwearied application; and as the reward of his pains, knew as much perhaps as most men.

He had an excellent and most affecting gift in prayer. O! with what solemnity, propriety, connexion, and copiousness, would he speak to the great God as the mouth of this Society! And as to his preaching, so far as I have heard from him, even in the decline of life, and after many great shocks from pain and sorrow, he usually discover'd a great furniture of knowledge in his compositions, and aimed at the information of the judgment, as well as the mending the heart.

Under all his uncommon pains of the body, and distress of mind, which he for many years endured, he discovered such meekness and patience, that one could not but think, that there was much of the spirit of a *Moses* and a *Job* united in him. Often have I heard him,

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and I hope I shall never forget it, justifying God in his dealings towards him; but no one ever heard, so far as I can find, a repining word drop from his lips. Tho' he say me yet will I trust in him, was the temper of his mind toward the sovereign ruler of the world. He often longed to depart and to be with Christ, but at the same time was religiously content to stay in this world, so long as God had any thing for him to do or suffer.

He was an affectionate husband, a tender parent, and a sincere friend; and the everlasting welfare of his people, friends, and family, lay near his heart. They are all greatly indebted to him for his pious and zealous endeavours to do them good, and for his frequent most ardent cries to God on their behalf.

During his last illness I had not much conversation with him, for he was not fit for it thro' weakness, tho' sensible for the most part even to his last hour. He desired I would not pray for his life, and seemed apprehensive that his work was done. He had peace in his soul, and good hope of future happiness, and after about six weeks illness, went off the stage of life with a smile in his countenance. How could he do otherwise than smile in the arms of death, when without doubt he looked up thro' an open heaven to a smiling God. O, that we may die the death of the righteous, and that our last end may be like his.

All that he printed, which is pity, were only three excellent pieces concerning the divinity of Christ.

Thus we have endeavoured to give you, tho' but in miniature, the character of one who was very much of the gentleman, the scholar, the divine, and the christian, and has left but few equals behind him.

What remains now but that we prepare to follow him? You dearly loved him, and he as dearly loved you; let your value then for his memory discover itself by acting up to his past instructions, and by imitating his bright and excellent example, so far as he trod in the footsteps of his, and our common Lord. And that you may do so, may the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the influences of the Holy Spirit, be with you. *Amen.*

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